



County of San Diego
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY
FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION
P.O. BOX 129261, SAN DIEGO, CA 92112-9261
Phone: (858) 505-6900 | Fax: (858) 999-8920 | www.sdcdehq.org



CLASS A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION APPLICATION PACKET

Thank you for your interest in starting your own Cottage Food Operation. We have designed this packet to streamline the application process, so as to maintain permit fees as low as possible and to save time in the permitting process. Please complete all applicable forms in this packet and submit the completed forms to our main office either over the counter, by mail, or via email at fhd cottagefood@sdcounty.ca.gov. Once we receive your packet and payment, it will be reviewed and you will be notified within ten (10) business days of the status of your submittal. Should you have any questions regarding the information in this packet, or any general questions regarding our Cottage Food Program, you can contact our Specialist on Duty directly at 858-505-6900, or stop by our main office Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00am-4:00pm, closed for lunch 12:00pm- 1:00pm.

All Cottage Food Operation products must comply with Section 114365.5 of the California Retail Food Code and must be approved by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for sale by a Cottage Food Operation. For a list of the allowed products, you may visit our website at www.sdcdehq.org. If you have a product that you would like to submit to CDPH for review, you may email them at fdbinfo@cdph.ca.gov.

Along with the completed application packet, you will also need to submit sample labels for review to DEHQ-FHD for the Cottage Food Products you intend to prepare in your home kitchen. Cottage Food Operators are required to submit labels for no more than ten (10) products for review including at least one product from each category of food to be prepared. Any product labels above the initial ten (10) that are submitted for review will be subject to the current DEHQ-FHD hourly rate. *(Sample labels must be submitted in either a Microsoft Word Document or PDF format and must reflect the final size, layout and color of the labels that will appear on your products)*

***Please click on the hyperlink below for FHD Fee Schedule:**
https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/deh/fhd/food/pdf/publications_feeschedule.pdf

Best wishes on your new business venture.



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COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION
APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

In order to be an approved Cottage Food Operator within San Diego County, interested parties must obtain approval from the Department of Environmental Health and Quality and their local city/county Building Department.

The items listed below must be submitted for review to the Department of Environmental Health and Quality, Food and Housing Division (DEHQ-FHD). Please ensure all required information is submitted in order to reduce delays in the approval of your application. You will be notified of the status of your application within ten (10) business days after receipt of your complete application packet.

Application Items Required:

- ☐ Completed Cottage Food Operation Registration Form
- ☐ Completed Self-Inspection Checklist *(This is to be completed for Class A applicants only)*
- ☐ Completed Health Permit Application *(This is to be completed for Class B applicants only)*
- ☐ Completed Cottage Food Operation Addendum Information
- ☐ Completed Cottage Food Operation List of Products Form
- ☐ Well Water Testing Results *(This is only for Cottage Food Operators whose water is supplied by a private well)*
- ☐ Food Handler Training Certificate *(Required to be submitted within 90 days of approval)*
- ☐ If you live within an incorporated city, submit a copy of your Business License from the city where your Cottage Food Operation is located. The address on the Business License must match your primary residence.
Please reference the [City Zoning list](#) located on the DEHQ-FHD website for individual city contact information. The following Cities require approval from DEHQ-FHD prior to issuing a Business License: Encinitas, Escondido, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, San Marcos, and Vista. For operations in any of these cities, you do not need to submit a business license with your application packet.
- ☐ If you live within an Unincorporated portion of San Diego County, your Cottage Food Operation (CFO) Registration form must be [electronically verified](#) by San Diego County Planning and Development Services (PDS). Prior to submitting your application to DEHQ-FHD, please submit your completed Cottage Food Operation Registration Form to PDS and obtain the required stamp, approving the use of your home to establish your CFO business.



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COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION

LABEL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Along with the completed application packet, you will also need to submit Sample Labels for review to DEHQ-FHD for the Cottage Food Products you intend to prepare in your home kitchen. Cottage Food Operators are required to submit labels for no more than ten (10) products for review including at least one product from each category of food to be prepared. Any product labels above the initial ten (10) that are submitted for review will be subject to the current DEHQ-FHD hourly rate. *Sample labels must be submitted in either a Microsoft Word Document or PDF format and must reflect the final size, layout and color of the labels that will appear on your products.*

The following is the information that must be included on your product labels to meet the requirements established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Please see the Labeling Requirement document available on our website for sample label layouts and additional details on the required information for your product labels.

- ☐ Name of the Cottage Food Operation which produced the food
- ☐ Full physical address of Cottage Food Operation (*If your business is listed in a major phone directory, just the City, State and Zip Code of your operation may be printed on your labels*)
- ☐ Common name of the product
- ☐ List of product ingredients in descending order by weight (*all sub ingredients must also be listed following each listed ingredient used*)
- ☐ Allergen declaration of any of the major allergens allowed to be used as ingredients in Cottage Food Products
- ☐ The net weight of your food product stated in both ounces and *grams* (*a place holder may be used to indicate where this will go on your label if the final weight has not been determined*)
- ☐ The words "Made in a Home Kitchen", or where applicable, "Repackaged in a Home Kitchen", printed in at least 12 point font (*if an uncommon font is used, a word document sample may be requested to verify font size*)
- ☐ Registration Number (Class A) or Permit Number (Class B) as issued by this department (*a place holder may be used until actual registration or permit number is issued – the number will be 17 digits long*)
- ☐ Name of the county issuing the Cottage Food Registration (Class A) or Cottage Food Permit (Class B)
- ☐ Nutritional Fact Panel (*only required when using the following terms: free, low, reduced, fewer, high, less, more, lean, extra lean, good source, light*)
- ☐ The minimum size of all text (except for "Made in a Home Kitchen") must be larger than 1/16" when measured at a lowercase "o"



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COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION REGISTRATION

Cottage Food Operation (CFO) Contact Information

CFO Name _____ Assessor's Parcel No. _____
CFO Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
CFO Owner's Name _____ Phone _____
Mailing Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
E-Mail Address _____ @ _____

CATEGORIES: ☐ **Class A: Direct Sales only** (self-certification checklist is required) ☐ **Class B: Direct and Indirect Sales** (permit application is required)

PROHIBITED ITEMS:

Foods containing cream, custard, or meat fillings are potentially hazardous and are not allowed. Only foods that are defined as "non-potentially hazardous" are approved for preparation by a Cottage Food Operation (CFO). These are food items that do not require refrigeration to keep them safe from bacterial growth that could be a cause of food-borne illness. If making buttercream frosting, icing, fondant and/or gum paste, it shall not contain eggs, cream or cream cheese

PRODUCTS THAT WILL BE PREPARED AT YOUR CFO: (Please check the items you will be preparing or selling)
This list is subject to change based on the current approved food list provided by the California Department of Public Health

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baked Goods | <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Pasta | <input type="checkbox"/> Marshmallows | <input type="checkbox"/> Tortillas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candy/Confections | <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Soup Mixes | <input type="checkbox"/> Mustard | <input type="checkbox"/> Vinegar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Churros | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Baking Mixes | <input type="checkbox"/> Popcorn/Popcorn Balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Waffle Cones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candied Apples | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Butters | <input type="checkbox"/> Pizzelles | <input type="checkbox"/> Jams/Jellies/Preserves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate Covered Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Tamales/Pies/ Fruit Empanadas | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts/ Nut Mixes/ Nut Butters | <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Tea/ Roasted Coffee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Fruit/ Vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Granola/Cereals/ Trail Mix | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet Sorghum Syrup & Honey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable and Potato Chips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Mole | <input type="checkbox"/> Herb / Spice Blends | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt Seasoning | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Candy |

Other (please specify) _____

PREFERRED LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN OR READ/Idiomas Preferido(s) Hablados o Leídos

We are committed to enhancing communication and services to our customers. In support of this effort, we are seeking information on the primary languages spoken by you and your staff. This information will allow FHD to continue to translate various applications and informational materials.

Preferred Language/Idioma preferido: Arabic Chinese – Cantonese Chinese – Mandarin English Farsi Filipino Japanese
Karen Korean Somali Spanish Vietnamese Other _____

Preferred Secondary Language/Segundo idioma preferido: Arabic Chinese – Cantonese Chinese – Mandarin English Farsi
Filipino Japanese Karen Korean Somali Spanish Vietnamese Other _____

Office Use Only: Approved By: _____ **Date:** _____

COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION REGISTRATION

POTABLE WATER SOURCE: Check the water source you will use in your Cottage Operation

☐ City Water District (please indicate water district below)

☐ Private Well*

WASTEWATER DISPOSAL: Indicate the type of system you will use to dispose of wastewater

☐ Public Sewer (please indicate sewer district below)

☐ Private Septic System*

FOR CLASS "A" & "B" OPERATIONS

- Be advised the additional wastewater flows from your cottage food operation may have an impact on your septic system
- If the site is served by a water well, the Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) requires that the water be analyzed by a private lab to ensure it meets minimum bacterial and chemical standards
- An annual well water analysis is required and shall consist of a total coliform bacteria test which shows the absence of coliform bacteria and a nitrate test which shows nitrates are at or below the MCL for nitrates.
- Should you have questions regarding this, please contact the Land & Water Quality Division at (858) 565-5173.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT: FOOD PROCESSOR COURSE:

Within **3 months** of being approved to operate by the Department of Environmental Health and Quality, you must provide proof of completion of the required California Department of Public Health (CDPH) food processor course, or other approved Food Safety Training Course. Proof of completion may be faxed to the Department at **(858) 999-8920** or emailed to fhd cottagefood@sdcounty.ca.gov. For information on CDPH course availability, visit their web site at www.cdph.ca.gov.

LABELING:

All cottage food must be labeled in accordance with the [Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act \(Title 21 of the U.S. Code; Sect. 343 et seq.\)](#).

The cottage food label shall include the following:

1. The words **"Made in a Home Kitchen"** in 12-point type. "Repackaged in a Home Kitchen" to be used when applicable and must also be printed in at least 12pt font.
2. The name commonly used for the food product.
3. The name of CFO which produced the food (Registered with DEHQ-FHD).
4. The physical address of the Cottage Food Operation.
5. The registration number (Class A) or permit number (Class B) and the name of the local enforcement agency that issued the permit (San Diego County).
6. The product ingredients in descending order by weight.
7. A declaration if the product contains any of the major food allergens allowed to be used as ingredients in Cottage Food Products.
8. The net weight of the product listed in grams and ounces.

****For Class B Operations only:** Products served without packaging or labeling shall be identified as homemade to the customer at a food facility; this can be done on the menu, menu board or any other easily accessible location

Along with your completed registration form, submit a copy of no more than ten (10) label(s) for your cottage food product(s) to this Department for review.

Operator's Certification Statement and Signature:

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I certify under penalty of law that I am the operator of this cottage food operation, not an employee or household member of the true operator. I further certify, based on my direct personal knowledge, that the statements of conformance with legal requirements made by my checkmarks on this document are true and correct. I will comply with the applicable requirements of the California Health and Safety Code and applicable County or City codes, including any directives or orders issued under the codes. I also certify that no modifications or alterations have been made to my residence to accommodate this cottage food operation that would require a building permit, and that prior to making any modifications, the appropriate building permits will be obtained from the local building department. I understand that the registration I am seeking will not be transferable to another person or location, and that this registration will become invalid and this cottage food operation illegal if required fees, including annual renewal fees, are not paid when due.

Owner's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Owner's Printed Name: _____



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COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION CLASS A SELF-CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

| Cottage Food Operation (CFO) Contact Information | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| CFO Name: _____ | | Assessor's Parcel No. _____ | | | | |
| CFO Address: _____ | | City: _____ | | Zip: _____ | | |
| CFO Owner Name: _____ | | | | | | |
| Mailing Address: _____ | | City: _____ | | State: _____ Zip: _____ | | |
| Phone _____ | Cell Phone _____ | E-Mail: _____ | | | | |
| Class "A" Cottage Food Operation Self-Certification Checklist | | | | | | |
| The following requirements apply to your operation. By checking the YES box you are certifying that you meet these requirements as specified in the Health and Safety Code section listed in bold numbers below. | | | | COMPLIES | | |
| Food Safety | | | | YES | NO | N/A |
| 1. Cottage food products will be non-potentially hazardous. 114365.5 Please refer to approved list of cottage foods. | | | | | | |
| 2. Cottage food production will only occur in registered areas of my residence. 113758 | | | | | | |
| 3. No cottage food preparation, packaging or handling will occur within the home kitchen concurrent with other domestic activities, such as family meal preparation, dishwashing, clothes washing or ironing, kitchen cleaning or guest entertaining. 114365 | | | | | | |
| 4. No infants, small children or pets will be in the home kitchen during the preparation, packaging or handling of any cottage food product. 114365 | | | | | | |
| 5. My cottage food operation will properly label all cottage food products with the following information: a) The words "Made in a Home Kitchen" in 12-point type on the cottage food product's primary label. 114365.2 b) The name commonly used for the food product or an adequately descriptive name. 114365.2 c) The name of the cottage food operation which produced the cottage food product (i.e. business name). 114365.2 d) The address of the Cottage Food Operation e) The registration/permit number of the class A or Class B cottage food operation. 114365.2 f) A list of ingredients of the cottage food product, in descending order of predominance by weight, if the product contains two or more ingredients. 114365.2 | | | | | | |
| Equipment and Utensils | | | | YES | NO | N/A |
| 6. All equipment and utensils used to produce cottage food products will be clean and maintained in a good state of repair. 114365 | | | | | | |
| Water and Sewage | | | | YES | NO | N/A |
| 7. All food contact surfaces, equipment and utensils are properly washed, rinsed and sanitized before each use. 114365 | | | | | | |
| 8. An adequate supply of potable hot and cold water will be provided and used during the preparation or as an ingredient of cottage food products. 114365.2 | | | | | | |

Class "A" Cottage Food Operation Self-Certification Checklist (continued)

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| The following requirements apply to your operation. By checking the YES box you are certifying that you meet these requirements as specified in the Health and Safety Code section listed in bold numbers below. | COMPLIES | | |
| Food Handling Employees | YES | NO | N/A |
| 9. A person who prepares or packages cottage food products shall complete a food processor course as determined by the California Department of Public Health within three months of becoming registered as a cottage food operation. 114365.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. A person involved in the preparation or packaging of cottage food will keep his or her hands and exposed portions of his or her arms clean and will wash his or her hands before any food preparation or packaging activity in a cottage food operation. 114365.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. A person with a contagious illness will refrain from work within the registered area of the cottage food operation. 114365.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Any smoking or eating will be prohibited in the portion of a private home used for the preparation, packaging, storage or handling of cottage food products and related ingredients or equipment, or both, while cottage food products are being prepared, packaged, stored or otherwise handled. 114365 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pest Control | YES | NO | N/A |
| 13. All registered area where cottage foods are prepared, packaged or stored will be maintained clean and free from vermin such as cockroaches, rodents, flies, food-infesting insects and other adulterating insects. 114365 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Operation | YES | NO | N/A |
| 14. Home kitchen has current Department of Environmental Health and Quality Registration to operate and complies with all additional requirements that may apply. Agrees to an inspection based on a consumer complaint. A charge will be assessed if the CFO is found out of compliance. 114365 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. The registered cottage food operator agrees to update the Department of Environmental Health and Quality on any changes to menu or operations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Approval of Cottage Food Operation has been obtained from the local Planning Agency and all other applicable agencies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. No modifications or alterations have been made that would require a building permit or a building permit has been obtained. If applicable, Building Permit # _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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|-----------------|
| Comments |
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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I certify under penalty of law that I am the operator of this cottage food operation, not an employee or household member of the true operator. I further certify, based on my direct personal knowledge, that the statements of conformance with legal requirements made by my checkmarks on this document are true and correct. I will comply with the applicable requirements of the California Health and Safety Code and applicable County or City codes, including any directives or orders issued under the codes. I understand that the registration I am seeking will not be transferable to another person or location, and that this registration will become invalid and this cottage food operation illegal if required fees, including annual renewal fees, are not paid when due. I understand and hereby consent to any information I provide on this permit application to be considered a public record subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Owner's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Owner's Printed Name: _____ **Title:** _____



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Cottage Food Operation (CFO) Contact Information

CFO Name _____
CFO Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
CFO Owner's Name _____ Phone _____
Mailing Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
E-Mail Address _____@_____

This addendum contains information for the Cottage Food Operation (CFO) owner and outlines their responsibilities. Please read each statement carefully and initial confirming your understanding.

_____ My Cottage Food Operation shall not have more than seventy five thousand dollars (\$75,000) in gross annual sales in the calendar year.

_____ My Cottage Food Operation shall only fulfill orders directly in person, via mail delivery, or via a third-party delivery service within California only.

_____ I understand that Cottage Food Products include only non-potentially hazardous foods, limited to the foods that are described in the approved food list in the California Retail Food Code and maintained current by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

_____ I understand that any buttercream frostings, buttercream icings, buttercream fondant and gum pastes prepared in my cottage food operation cannot contain eggs, cream or cream cheese.

_____ I understand that I am responsible to ensure that all product labels meet the requirements established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and San Diego County Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ-FHD).

_____ I understand that a Class A Cottage Food Operation may engage in direct sales only.

_____ I understand that Class B Cottage Food Operation may engage in direct & indirect sales only.

_____ I understand that I am required to maintain my permit (Class B) or registration (Class A) at any point of direct sales and provide it for inspection when requested.

Owner's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Owner's Printed Name: _____



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COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION LIST OF PRODUCTS

| Cottage Food Operation (CFO) Contact Information | | | |
|--|--|-------------|-----------|
| CFO Name _____ | | | |
| CFO Address _____ | | City _____ | Zip _____ |
| CFO Owner's Name _____ | | Phone _____ | |

Please list all products submitted for approval (attach additional sheets as needed)

| Product Name | Product Category | Approved | Not Approved |
|--------------|------------------|----------|--------------|
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|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Owner's Signature: _____ | Date: _____ |
| Owner's Printed Name: _____ | |



Date: _____

Owner's Printed Name: _____